III. The Land and Its Natural Features

A. The Present Use of Land

It is necessary to study the present use of land and compare the uses to those of the recent past so as to understand the forces which have influenced its development. In the spring of 1976, a land use survey of Selma and its planning area was undertaken. While undoubtedly a few changes have occurred since then and the time of this writing (early autumn), the most notable has been the destruction of numerous vacant, dilapidated houses. The base map that will thus be discussed will be accurate within this framework.

B. Soils

General Description

Interpretation of the soil survey field sheets prepared by the Soil Conservation Service in the summer of 1976 discloses that four major soil series dominate within the planning area--Rains, Lynchburg, Goldsboro, and Norfolk. Within town and south of the Southern Railway, the Rains is more prevalent; north of the railroad tracks and east of Pollock Street, the residential areas are located on Rains, Lynchburg, and Goldsboro soils; west of Pollock Street, Norfolk Lynchburg, and Goldsboro are dominant.

1. Rains - The Rains series consists of poorly drained, moderately permeable soils. They generally occur on flats and in depressions. Slopes are generally less than 2 percent.

2. Lynchburg - These soils are also poorly drained, are moderately permeable, occur on flats and nearly level ridges, and the slopes are generally less than 2 percent.

3. Goldsboro - This series consists of nearly level to gently sloping land, and it is moderately well drained. Slopes range from 0 to 5 percent.

4. Norfolk - This land consists of well drained and near level to sloping soils. Slopes range from 0 to 10 percent.

By utilizing the rather detailed soil survey field sheets data superimposed on a base map of the Selma planning area, a rather graphic depiction of land capability for certain urban purposes is revealed. In addition, these capabilities should figure prominantly in the forthcoming update of the town's zoning ordinance.

In selecting a site for a home, industry, or recreation, the suitability of the soils at each site must be determined. Some of the more common properties affecting the use of the soils for non-agricultural purposes are soil texture, reaction, soil depth, shrink-swell potential, steepness of slopes, permeability, depth to hard rock, depth to the water table, and flood hazard. On the basis of these and related characteristics, the soil scientists have rated the major soils for specific purposes. The ratings used are slight, moderate, and severe; they are defined below: